

## Von der Leyen’s tasks for the new EU Commission – Part 4

### “A Healthy Europe”

		
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<b>Executive Vice-President</b>	<b>Vice-President</b>	Commissioner for Health
Coordination of the portfolio “A European Green Deal”	Coordination of the portfolio “Protecting our European way of life”	DG Health and Food Safety (SANTE)

On 16 July 2019, Ursula von der Leyen was elected as the new President of the future EU Commission by the European Parliament. On 10 September 2019, she submitted the candidates who are to make up her Commission in the forthcoming 2019-2024 legislative period and who will probably be confirmed by the European Parliament at the end of November.

This cepAdhoc assesses the core health policy tasks which von der Leyen will be entrusting to the assigned Commissioners: Margaritas Schinas, in Public Health, and Frans Timmermans, in Food Safety and Animal and Plant Protection, will work together with Stella Kyriakides.

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
Frans Timmermans (Netherlands), Margrethe Vestager (Denmark) and Valdis Dombrovskis (Latvia) will be given a prominent role in the new Commission. They are all Executive Vice-Presidents and will take on a dual function: Firstly, they are each in charge of a core portfolio and will coordinate the work of the Commissioners that are responsible for that area. Secondly, as specialist Commissioners, they are also responsible for their own policy area and will be supported in this regard by the relevant Directorates General of the Commission.





In addition to the three Executive Vice-Presidents, five additional members of the Commission will become Vice-Presidents. Three of these – Věra Jourová (Czechia), Margaritis Schinas (Greece) and Josep Borrell (Spain) – will also lead individual groups of Commissioners.

The EU Commission still has to be confirmed by the European Parliament. In this regard, it has held hearings of the nominated candidates. The original timetable will not be met so the new Commission probably will not take up its official duties until 1 December.



This cepAdhoc assesses the core health policy tasks which von der Leyen will be entrusting to her future Commissioners. Margaritis Schinas is responsible for public health. Frans Timmermans is responsible for Food Safety and Animal and Plant Protection. Both of them will work together with Stella Kyriakides in this regard.

## Tasks assigned by the Commission President

Health	
Kyriakides Schinas	Ensure the <b>supply of affordable medicines</b> whilst also supporting the <b>European pharmaceutical industry</b> .
	 <b>cepAssessment:</b> These are two conflicting aims. Very cost-intensive pharmaceutical research is only worthwhile if the expenditure can be compensated by way of high sales revenues, i.e. corresponding prices. At the same time, a swift market launch of generic drugs and biosimilars is important to reduce prices and thus also ensure affordable medicines.
	<b>Effectively implement</b> the new regulatory framework on <b>medical devices</b> in order to protect patients.
	 <b>cepAssessment:</b> Practical problems arose during implementation of the Medical Devices Regulation; in particular, there are too few “notified bodies” where medical device manufacturers have to newly certify their products. Without transitional solutions, supply bottlenecks arise for certain medical products, which undermine patient protection.

<p>Kyriakides Schinas</p>	<p>Fully implement the <b>European Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)</b> and work with international partners to reach a global agreement on the use of and access to antimicrobials.</p>
	<p><b>cepAssessment:</b> Reducing the use of antimicrobials is essential for combating AMR. EU efforts in the global fight against AMR, in international organisations and through cooperation with third countries, particularly developing countries, are thus also essential for the success in the fight against AMR in the EU (see <a href="#">cepPolicyBrief</a>).</p>
<p>Submit a <b>plan for beating cancer</b> which includes measures for the various different phases (prevention, diagnosis, treatment, life as cancer-survivor and palliative care) and which helps Member States to improve cancer care and cancer treatment.</p>	
	<p><b>cepAssessment:</b> Support for and the coordination of cancer research in the Member States is appropriate. The added value of a single EU plan with concrete measures aimed at fighting apparently all types of cancer is however less apparent. Above all, other health conditions should not be disregarded.</p>
<p>Kyriakides<sup>1</sup> Schinas</p>	<p><b>Make the most of the potential of “e-health”</b> in order to guarantee high-quality healthcare and reduce inequalities.</p>
	<p><b>cepAssessment:</b> In relation to the digitalisation of healthcare, the EU’s primary aim is to enable citizens to have secure access to their health data and to enable the secure sharing of this data across borders. The EU can achieve a great deal in this area by way of voluntary cooperation, even without legislative competences. This has been shown e.g. by the creation of the European Electronic Health Record exchange format (see <a href="#">cepPolicyBrief</a>). The EU should continue with voluntary cooperation and concentrate on further developing the exchange format for Electronic Health Records in this regard, as it represents the basis for a cross-border exchange of patient data and will therefore make it significantly easier for EU citizens to utilise cross-border healthcare.</p>
<p>Create a <b>“European Health Data Space”</b> in order to promote the <b>exchange of health data</b> and <b>support research throughout the health sector</b>, thereby ensuring that citizens have <b>control over their own data</b>.</p>	
	<p><b>cepAssessment:</b> An EU-wide data space for health data may favour innovation as a result of the increased availability of data. It must, however, be guaranteed that every citizen has control over the sharing of their data. The decisive factors will be which data is made available, what access rights are provided and how effective protection of the data will be ensured.</p>

<sup>1</sup> She will also work together with Executive Vice-President Vestager with regard to **“Digital Health”**.

Kyriakides Timmermans	<p>Improve the <b>visibility and completeness of consumer information</b> about <b>health aspects and the sustainability of foods</b>.</p>
	<p> <b>cepAssessment:</b> Health information on foods is only helpful if it correctly reflects the situation. The completeness of the information and the sustainability of foods are, however, highly elastic concepts and a sense of proportion must be used when defining them more concretely. Sustainability criteria in particular must be defined in a sensible, clear and uniform manner.</p>
	<p>Develop a new <b>strategy of "Farm to Fork"</b> for sustainable food <b>which will cover every step in the food chain</b> from production to consumption and include inter alia consumer information, food safety as well as animal and plant protection.</p>
<p> <b>cepAssessment:</b> Such a strategy must first clearly define "sustainability" in order to provide the consumer with genuine support in making an informed choice. It must reasonably balance the interests of consumers and of businesses, as it has basically been achieved in the case of the European risk assessment relating to the food chain for example (see <a href="#">cepAdhoc</a>).</p>	